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Ms Joan Deslandes
Headteacher
Kingsford Community School
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Dear Ms Deslandes

Short inspection of Kingsford Community School

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 2017 with Pat Slonecki, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. This is because the team has a consistently positive impact on pupils' achievement and well-being. A strong feature of your leadership, and that of your senior team, is the way the needs of pupils are dealt with in the school. Information about pupils' academic and personal development is used sensitively to identify those who need help and define the interventions that suit them best. As a result, pupils are supported effectively and make good progress from their different starting points.

Effective leadership has ensured that the areas identified for improvement in the last inspection have been tackled successfully. For example, pupils' achievement in mathematics has improved. You agree that the most able could do even better and have well-founded strategies to raise achievement further.

You have established a very clear vision for the school that focuses on helping every pupil reach their potential. This is evidenced by the number of pupils who, after leaving Kingsford, achieve very well in their A levels and go on to top universities. It also shows in the high proportion of pupils who move on to sustained education, employment or training after they leave the school. This is the result of leaders' work to provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to find out about the world of work and of further and higher education. Trips to local businesses and universities, careers events and links with other schools and educational bodies in countries across the world expands pupils' horizons.

Another strong feature of the school is the rigorous way you, and senior and middle leaders, check pupils' progress. Information is collected from a wide range of evaluations, including assessments, attendance and behaviour patterns, and teachers' observations. This is presented clearly so that leaders can identify accurately where there are pupils, or groups of pupils, who are not achieving as well as they should. This enables senior leaders, including governors, to take decisive action to improve teaching or amend the curriculum, and ensure that interventions meet the needs of each pupil effectively.

The curriculum is well designed and gives pupils a broad range of experiences and a good balance of academic and creative subjects. Pupils start their GCSE courses in Year 9 and follow different 'pathways' depending on their interests and abilities. This gives pupils the time to build up their knowledge and apply their understanding. It also ensures that pupils study courses that are tailored effectively to their needs.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are suitably robust to make sure that pupils are safe and well cared for. Detailed record-keeping helps leaders to follow up referrals effectively. They maintain close contact with external agencies to check that pupils are getting the support they need. Training is thorough. Staff have a clear understanding of the relevant guidance and advice about keeping pupils safe. They know about the different forms of abuse and the school has rightly emphasised being vigilant about child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and radicalisation. Staff know to whom to refer any concerns they may have and the procedures for doing so.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school and that they know who to turn to if they have a problem. They are clear that bullying is rare. One pupil noted that, 'it would lack integrity to be a bully'. Pupils talked confidently about the different aspects of safety such as internet safety and keeping themselves safe outside school. Pupils have a range of opportunities to learn about keeping safe through assemblies, personal, social and health education lessons and tutor sessions. The school also runs sessions for parents, for example about how to spot whether their children are at risk of radicalisation.

Inspection findings

- Leaders' rigorous analysis of the pupils' current performance indicates that achievement is improving, especially in English. The analysis also suggests that the GCSE outcomes for current Year 11 pupils are on track to be better than those in 2016. This is because the school has tackled last year's drop in the GCSE results for English robustly and decisively. It illustrates leaders' determination to do the best for pupils and the impact of their actions. The governors have played a central role in ensuring that the school has the necessary resources, including staff, to improve teaching and standards in English.

- Achievement in mathematics and humanities has also improved. This, too, is the result of clear action taken by leaders. In mathematics, overall progress is strong and compares favourably with other schools. Pupils who have low starting points, including disadvantaged pupils, do especially well. Overall achievement in science and languages is also strong. Although progress in humanities was below expectations in the 2016 examinations, it is now improving because of the work to boost pupils' English skills.
- Leaders have identified accurately that the progress of the most able pupils has not been as good as other groups in some subjects. As with English and mathematics, this is being tackled successfully, for example by challenging the most able pupils to reach the highest grades in their GCSE examinations. Leaders monitor the impact of their actions effectively and recognise that there remains work to be done to stretch and challenge pupils of all abilities. However, the improvements over the past few years show that there is leadership capacity to do so.
- Teachers have high expectations which they translate into well-devised programmes and work that challenges pupils. Leaders have done a lot of work to improve teachers' use of questions to stretch pupils' thinking and draw out their understanding. This is clear to see during visits to lessons. However, there remain some occasions where questioning is not as effective. As leaders recognise, this is part of their work to develop a range of approaches to challenge pupils of all abilities.
- Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Teachers know their pupils well and show them great respect. This creates a very positive climate for learning. In return, pupils work hard for their teachers and are very keen to do well. As one pupil noted, 'everyone wants to achieve good things at Kingsford.' This sense of achieving 'good things' defines pupils' attitudes to school and the staff's attitudes to pupils. As a result, pupils are highly motivated, well-behaved and take their work seriously. These characteristics have a positive impact on pupils' personal development as well as their academic performance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to develop new and different approaches to stretch and challenge all pupils, regardless of their starting points.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Newham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Brian Oppenheim
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, the inspectors carried out the following activities:

- met with the headteacher, and senior and middle leaders
- held a meeting with three members of the governing body
- met with a group of pupils to seek their views of the school
- listened to a group of pupils reading
- reviewed a range of documents including, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, information about pupils' progress, minutes of meetings of the governing body and pupils' attendance. The school's single central record of pre-employment checks and safeguarding procedures were also reviewed
- the school's website was scrutinised and confirmed that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information
- considered 232 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 23 responses to a survey of staff views and comments made by nine parents
- visited a range of lessons jointly with senior leaders.